

London County Council.

REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ON THE
TEACHING OF SEX HYGIENE

TOGETHER WITH
PRÉCIS OF EVIDENCE

ON THE SUBJECT GIVEN BEFORE A SECTION OF THE
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

AND
MEMORANDA CONTAINING

- (i.) Information for the use of girls on leaving school.
- (ii.) Information for Parents, Teachers and Ministers of Religion for the purpose of safeguarding girls seeking employment.

(Ordered to be printed.)

R. BLAIR,
Education Officer.

L.C.C. Education Offices,
Victoria Embankment, W.C.
20th May, 1914.

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TEACHING OF SEX HYGIENE IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

(Submitted to the Council on 26th May, 1914).

The question whether sex hygiene should be taught in the public elementary schools provided or maintained by the Council has increasingly been engaging the attention of managers and others interested in education, and resolutions have, from time to time, been forwarded to us by conferences of members of the Council and managers and members of care committees, recommending, in general terms, that instruction in sex hygiene should be given in elementary schools. For some years past such resolutions have been discussed at the annual meetings of the members of the Council and school managers, whilst the matter has been considered at a number of such meetings without any resolutions being forwarded. On 29th April, 1913, our Elementary Education Sub-Committee appointed a special section to consider and report as to what action, if any, can be taken with reference to the question of instruction in sex hygiene and purity in the public elementary schools maintained by the Council. The section consisted of Miss C. S. Bulcraig, Mr. G. L. Bruce, and the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett, together with the chairman (the Right Hon. the Viscount Hill) and the vice-chairman (Mr. H. C. Gooch) of the Sub-Committee, and the chairman (Mr. John W. Gilbert) and the vice-chairman (Mr. Oscar E. Warburg) of the Education Committee. The section appointed the Right Hon. the Viscount Hill as chairman.

We have now received the report of our Elementary Education Sub-Committee upon the proceedings of the section. During the inquiry most careful consideration was given to the question whether it is desirable to allow the teaching of sex hygiene in the elementary schools, and the following persons were interviewed on the subject—

Miss T. E. BONWICK, B.A., Head Mistress, Girls' Department, Enfield-road School (*Hackney, C.*).

Mrs. E. E. CADLEY, Head Mistress, Girls' Department, Swaffield-road School (*Wandsworth*).

Mrs. M. E. LAIRD, Head Mistress, Girls' Department, Middle-row School (*Kensington, N.*).

Mr. J. W. SAMUEL, B.A., Head Master, the Millwall Central Mixed School (*Poplar*).

Mrs. S. J. BANNISTER, L.L.A., Principal, Moorfields Training College (*City*).

- Mr. W. A. NICHOLLS, late Head Master, Boys' Department,
Ruby-street School (*Peckham*).
- Mrs. E. M. BURGWIN, Superintendent of Special Schools.
- Mr. R. B. HENDERSON, M.A., Head Master, Strand School.
(*Norwood*).
- Mrs. E. McMILLAN, Head Mistress, Girls' Department, The
"Moberly" School (*Paddington, S.*).
- Miss J. L. D. FAIRFIELD, M.D., Ch.B., Medical Assistant, London
County Council.
- Mr. C. J. THOMAS, M.B., B.Sc., D.P.H., Assistant Medical Officer,
London County Council.
- Major ERNEST GRAY, Member of the London County Council.
-

[In conducting the inquiry, it has been the endeavour of the section to obtain expressions of opinion from persons possessed of different kinds of experience, so that they should not come to a conclusion without having had an opportunity of weighing evidence from all sides.

At an early stage of the proceedings it was ascertained that teaching in sex hygiene was given in one of the Council's schools, and the head mistress of that school was accordingly interviewed.

The main object of the inquiry was to determine whether the teaching of sex hygiene in the Council's elementary schools was advisable, and, if so, under what conditions it should be taught, *e.g.*, if allowed at all, whether it should be given under a properly prepared syllabus and to classes, or whether it should be given privately in cases where, in the opinion of the head teachers, such a course was necessary. As the inquiry proceeded, further aspects of the question were discussed, and these have been dealt with in the report.

After very careful consideration, we have arrived at the conclusion that under no circumstances should sex hygiene be introduced into the class teaching in elementary schools. The objections to such teaching may be summarised as follows.

In the first place the knowledge of children in such matters depends very largely upon the type of home from which they are drawn. Where, as is unfortunately too commonly the case, the parents and children live in one room, in which all the events of life and death take place, the knowledge of the children must be very different from that of children who come from a home where they are carefully guarded and who may obtain no information of this kind until they are over fourteen years of age. Under these circumstances, it would be a task of the greatest difficulty to teach this subject satisfactorily in class, since, while to some children the facts are already known, there are others to whom the knowledge might come as a shock. Moreover, not only does children's knowledge differ, but they have different temperaments; and a method of treatment of this subject which might benefit one child, might harm another.

In the second place, we feel strongly that speaking of these subjects in class must tend to break down the children's natural modesty and reserve. Children naturally feel that, if their teacher talks about a matter, they can talk about it too, and one of the medical witnesses gave evidence of the undesirable conversations which took place among the children in a school where definite class teaching was given, and stated that, for this among other reasons, she was totally opposed to class teaching. This opinion was endorsed by experienced head teachers, and, indeed, by all the witnesses with the exception of one. Major Ernest Gray, who gave evidence on the matter, was of the opinion that a syllabus could be prepared covering the essence of the subject and the processes of nature be taught with propriety under such a syllabus on botanical and biological lines. He, however, was emphatic that a syllabus submitted to him, which included within its purview the subject of sex relationships, was one which was altogether unsuited for an elementary school.

The next question to which consideration was given was whether, if the subject could not be taught in class, it might be advisable for head teachers, where they saw the need in individual cases, to speak to their children privately.

We feel that there are various ways in which the teachers may assist in bringing about a better knowledge of the problems of life among the children committed to their charge. Some witnesses, for instance, drew attention to the good that may be done by keeping in close touch with the parents and endeavouring to secure their co-operation in keeping a watch upon their children and exercising some restraint over their conduct out of school. One head teacher expressed the opinion that this was specially important in view of the excessive freedom which young girls now so frequently enjoy. We consider that more good will result by communicating with parents in individual cases than by holding parents' meetings on the subject.

Again, we are strongly of opinion that teachers may do great good by talking to children privately, whether to point out to them the seriousness of some habit into which they appear to be falling, or to warn them of the dangers to which they may be exposed when they leave school. Many of the witnesses who were seen laid great stress upon the importance of thus dealing with individual cases. The nature of the advice given will naturally depend upon the individual child and the individual teacher. In some cases it may be better to lay more stress on inculcating care and reverence for the body, in other cases to appeal mainly to the moral side of the child. Probably it will usually be found best to combine the two aspects of the case. As one of the witnesses stated, there was a danger of laying too much stress on the purely physical side of the matter.

In this connection evidence was adduced to show that the medical examination might be instrumental in discovering the

existence of vicious habits, and we are of opinion that the co-operation of the school doctor in this respect may often be of great value.

The help of the class teacher will also be beneficial in dealing with individual cases, but, generally speaking, we are of opinion that the responsibility should rest with the head teacher, and we are impressed by the testimony of the good which could be done where the head teacher exercises close supervision over the tone of the school, by constant inspection of the offices, by watching the behaviour and language of the children, and by letting them realise that a high standard of thought and action is expected from every child. We also feel that much good has resulted from the practice which some head teachers adopt of speaking to the elder children before they leave school, and warning them of the dangers and temptations to which they may be exposed.

In order that teachers may be as fully equipped as possible for dealing with this important phase of school life, consideration has been given to the question of instruction for teachers in training. Attention was directed to the fact that there are certain difficulties and problems of a serious nature which arise in connection with even young children, and we consider that it would be advisable for the teachers' training course to make provision for the students receiving some advice as to the best way of handling such difficulties, and some instruction which would cause them to be on the watch for the appearance of undesirable habits in the children entrusted to their charge. We have considered incidentally the question of the teaching of sex hygiene in places of higher education. In connection with the general consideration of the subject, we have come to the conclusion that children of fourteen years and upwards, when they reach the adolescent stage, need some guidance on the question of sex hygiene, and we are of opinion that the subject is one which could be satisfactorily dealt with in the evening institutes. Several of the witnesses drew attention to this point. One witness suggested that it would be advisable to give some instruction in the evening institutes, and thought that in the higher classes of the secondary schools some reference to the matter might be made in connection with the lessons on human hygiene and physiology now being conducted.

During the inquiry, attention was drawn to the evils which appear to arise owing to the lack of adequate supervision of open spaces, and we have approved a suggestion that the attention of all authorities concerned should be drawn to the moral dangers arising from insufficient supervision. We are accordingly communicating with the Parks and Small Holdings and Allotments Committee with a view to securing their co-operation in this respect.

From a review of the above considerations, it will be seen that we are not prepared to recommend the teaching of sex hygiene as a class subject in public elementary schools, and that we have

arranged for consideration to be given (i.) to the importance of the subject of sex hygiene during the early adolescent stage, and to the possibility of suitable guidance being given in connection therewith to students attending the evening institutes ; and (ii.) to the advisability of making provision for teachers in training to receive some advice which will enable them to deal with undesirable habits in the children entrusted to their charge.

We are impressed with the attention which has been given to the whole question in the public press, and, having regard to the interest shown in the subject by persons engaged in education, we have decided that our report together with the evidence submitted by witnesses, should be distributed among the teachers of the public elementary schools provided or maintained by the Council, and should be placed on sale. During the progress of the inquiry certain memoranda, entitled " Information for the use of girls on leaving school " and " Information for Parents, Teachers and Ministers of Religion for the purpose of safeguarding girls seeking employment," were considered by the special section and carefully revised by them. These documents have for their object the dissemination of information as to the possible dangers to girls when first taking up situations, especially abroad, and we are of opinion that it would be of great advantage for a number to be placed in the hands of every head teacher.

We have decided, therefore, that these memoranda should be included as an appendix to the report and further, that 100,000 copies of each memorandum should be printed separately. The former document will be distributed, by means of the teachers, to girls on leaving school, and the latter will be supplied to teachers, correspondents and others for general distribution. We have given instructions for a copy of the report and evidence to be supplied to each member of the Council who desires to have one.

JOHN W. GILBERT,

Chairman.

II.

PRÉCIS OF EVIDENCE.

Given before a Section of the Elementary Education
Sub-Committee.

The following persons were interviewed by the Section :—

- Miss T. E. BONWICK, B.A., Head Mistress, Girls' Dept., Enfield-road School. (*Hackney, C.*)
Mrs. E. E. CADLEY, Head Mistress, Girls' Dept., Swaffield-road School. (*Wandsworth.*)
Mrs. M. E. LAIRD, Head Mistress, Girls' Dept., Middle-row School. (*Kensington, N.*)
Mr. J. W. SAMUEL, B.A., Head Master, Mixed Dept., The Millwall Central School. (*Poplar.*)
Mrs. S. J. BANNISTER, LL.A., Principal, Moorfields Training College. (*City.*)
Mr. W. A. NICHOLLS, late Head Master, Boys' Dept., Ruby-street, School. (*Peckham.*)
Mrs. E. M. BURGWIN, Superintendent of Special Schools.
Mr. R. B. HENDERSON, M.A., Head Master, Strand School. (*Norwood.*)
Mrs. E. McMILLAN, Head Mistress, Girls' Dept., The "Moberly" School. (*Paddington, S.*)
Miss J. L. D. FAIRFIELD, M.D., Ch.B., Medical Assistant, London County Council.
Mr. C. J. THOMAS, M.B., B.Sc., D.P.H., Assistant Medical Officer, London County Council.
Major ERNEST GRAY, Member of the London County Council.

Miss T. E. BONWICK, B.A., *Head Mistress, Girls' Dept., Enfield-road School (Hackney, C.).*

Miss Bonwick stated that she had introduced lessons on sex, hygiene into the course on Health and Home Knowledge and Nature Study in the Girls' Department of the Enfield-road L.C.C. School, because of the moral dangers, both physical and mental, to which boys and girls are exposed; and she urged the view formed as the result of considerable experience in the slums and in schools of all types that the efficacy of self-protection was greater than that of external protection. She considered that children should be protected by true and beautifully worded knowledge from the danger of their minds being poisoned by ignorant or impurely-minded persons. Children should be acquainted with the truth in sex matters so far as their minds are able to grasp it, and their curiosity should be satisfied in a simple and straightforward way; they should be brought to see the difference between

shame and modesty, and a reverence for their own bodies and the bodies of others should be inculcated. The standard of morality would be thus raised, and the idea of marriage responsibility would be set on a higher plane in its physical, moral and civic aspects.

In advocating the teaching of sex hygiene, she realised that certain conditions were necessary. In the first place, the subject should only be introduced with the full co-operation of the parents of the children. In her experience she had found the parents exceedingly grateful to the teachers for what they had undertaken in this direction ; and the only criticism of the parents was directed to the fact that the subject had not been introduced before. She referred to the meeting of mothers which she addressed recently, on this subject, for which she sent out 400 invitations and at which 120 persons were present, and of those eventually only one raised objection to the teaching, a few others who were not present having separate talks with her afterwards for the removal of their difficulties.

In the second place, the work should be in capable hands ; all teachers might not be prepared for it, hence it should not be introduced compulsorily, but teachers who desired to undertake the work should be encouraged in their efforts ; at the same time classes should be held in every part of London and in all training colleges, by means of which present and future teachers may be given an opportunity of understanding the need and methods of such teaching.

Thirdly, she pointed out the absolute necessity of introducing the subject gradually and of avoiding any abruptness. Instruction should not be given as a separate subject—it should come quite gradually, simply and naturally in the course of the ordinary work. Any attempt to enshroud it in an atmosphere of pseudo-mystery should be deprecated. It was far more desirable to treat the subject collectively than individually. By making it a part of the ordinary class subjects the more self-conscious children were best approached and not embarrassed.

Miss Bonwick urged that all efforts in this direction must raise the moral standard of the individual and promote the welfare of the race, by giving an increased sense of parental responsibility.

The danger of coarseness on the part of the teachers was remote because the teachers who would be gross in dealing with the subject and at the same time were anxious to teach it, must be few, and the children who gained the knowledge from outside sources were more likely to be injured morally by its being left entirely to that method.

It was impossible that a child of fourteen or fifteen could follow the subject in its technically scientific details, but from the point of view of self-protection and of understanding the general principles of propagation of life, it was most desirable. The moral protection of the children did not involve the development of their precocity. The knowledge was necessary for them from the point of view of what they might have to face in the future, and in order to raise their ideals. It all depended upon how the

knowledge was given. If the knowledge was given by an outsider in an impure or superficial manner, as was too often the case, then a tendency to wrong thinking and living would probably result ; but if in a pure and accurate way, then our children would be much more likely to be pure in mind and life.

The more advanced portion of the syllabus which she had submitted was intended for the use of the girls when they themselves should become mothers. They were taught in quite a simple way the care of their own children. As they were growing children it was desirable to point out the general principles upon which they must train their children, to train them to have perfect confidence in their parents.

As to the misleading nature of questions and answers about the physiological facts of life, it was urged that a mother or a father often could not explain in simple enough language what their children wanted to know, but that there were ways of giving answers that were perfectly true and clear to the minds of children with which every teacher should be acquainted ; quite a different thing from telling them untruths.

As to the standard of morals to-day among young people, so far as figures indicated, the temptations of children were increasing.

She had recognised the very great difficulty there is with girls in the matter of gaining sex knowledge, and how extremely careful even a teacher of many years' experience must be to watch the mental attitude of the girls. It was especially in that connection that she felt it was necessary to give direct instruction in a natural and gradual way. It was because she felt the importance of that point that she chose to speak to girls collectively rather than as individuals. By speaking to a girl about dealing with "*her*" body, she was made self-conscious, whereas if the subject of "*the*" body were dealt with in class it was more in the abstract.

In the matter of wrong behaviour in the offices, for example, it was never suggested that because there was danger of a few teachers being somewhat coarse, that therefore no teachers should approach their classes on the matter. This objection ought then to have no weight in the matter of sex teaching. It seemed essential that they should learn by experience how best to deal with this important question.

After the lessons she most carefully watched the children. She followed them down to play without their knowing it. She sat about and watched them, and saw them going on with their games as usual, without any undesirable gossiping or excitement. On one occasion, she found a group of five girls talking in whispers, and at once called them and asked them if they had any difficulty, and they quite frankly told her the question in their minds which was connected with the lesson and which she answered.

If the parents were pure-minded and had the right conceptions of marriage, if they were in moral and spiritual accord with their children, and if they had accurate knowledge of the physiological

processes, and the power of expressing themselves in a suitable way, then it was the ideal thing for the parent to instruct the child, but teachers in elementary schools at least know how rarely is this ideal parent to be found in real life.

Immediately after she had her talk with the parents, she asked them to put any questions they liked, and one mother at once got up and said she only wished it had been done years and years ago. All the mothers broke out into spontaneous applause, and many came up and thanked her. This was the case with the large majority of the mothers. Of course, where teachers had only dealt with individual cases that had been forced before their notice she quite realised that there were far more cases needing urgent attention which would never come before their notice, and that it was, therefore, a great mistake to wait for special incidents to occur before talking frankly to the children.

So far as her experience went, she had not found that the majority of teachers possessed the knowledge necessary to give instruction in this subject, and that their training was thus one of the most urgent needs of present-day education.

Memorandum submitted by Miss Bonwick.

The following is a brief summary of the chief reasons why I feel that the teaching of sex hygiene in elementary schools is so essential :—

(1) In order that the growth of *wrong conceptions* of love and of some of the most important things in life, both physical and mental, may be prevented. That thus the undue familiarity between girls and boys or men, arising from ignorance, may be avoided ; and that also the morbidness or coarse vulgarity which so often results from the failure in learning the truth accurately and beautifully told may be reduced to a minimum.

(2) *To protect* the children from those of evil mind or intent trying to poison the minds or injure the bodies of both girls and boys, individuals to be found not only in our streets, but also in shops, lodging houses, or even in our very schools as agents. I should like to have brought definite and general evidence of cases of these kinds which have come under my personal notice before the attention of the Committee, had there been opportunity. Vague warnings unexplained are usually futile, giving rise rather to panic or morbid curiosity than to a sense of dignity and self-respect.

(3) For the *improvement of the race* by leading the children to understand, as far as their mental development will allow, something of the importance of good marriage, and of the injury to themselves, their children, and the race, of unhealthy marriages or illicit unions.

In order that the three-fold purpose of forestalling wrong conceptions, of protecting the children by knowledge, and of furthering

the improvement of the race may be fulfilled, I am convinced that the teaching of sex hygiene as a class subject in connection with ordinary science work is superior to either home, individual or outside treatment, because—

(a) The majority of parents are incapable, sometimes morally, sometimes intellectually, of teaching their own children.

(b) The suitable class teacher understands how to adapt herself and her instruction to the minds of her pupils.

(c) It comes more naturally to the child and prevents her becoming unduly self-conscious.

(d) It precedes the wrong impressions which are otherwise almost sure to be made from without and of which the teacher usually knows nothing.

(e) The parents of our girls have almost unanimously given their consent or expressed their approval of the giving of such instruction to their children in school.

Finally, it is my strong conviction that the problem before all educationalists is how we may best train our teachers for the giving of the necessary instruction in school and how we may best appeal to the present head teachers to preserve all necessary precautions.

Mrs. E. E. CADLEY, *Head Mistress, Girls' Dept., Swaffield-road School (Wandsworth).*

Mrs. Cadley stated that a scheme of lessons on this subject was not at all suitable for young children.

Undue prominence should not be given to sex-teaching, although in individual cases it might be necessary to step over this boundary.

Children in a class are of varying ages and are developed at different times and therefore sex-teaching, as class-teaching, is unsuitable and likely to be followed by harmful results.

Children should be taught reverence for their bodies and such traits of character as purity of thought, word, deed, modesty, quiet and refined behaviour, etc.

It does not appear necessary to refrain from imparting to a girl before leaving school some knowledge of her future destiny, but such knowledge should be wisely chosen and tactfully given by experienced persons.

Young teachers are not, for various reasons, fitted to give such instruction.

It is to be remembered that in no other subject does the personality of the teacher bear such weight.

She suggested that :—

(1) Local authorities should insist that a child has a birth-right to a decent environment and that a whole family should not live together in one room.

(2) Lectures should be given to mothers by qualified persons, preferably by lady doctors.

(3) Sex-teaching, even then, should not be given undue prominence, but parents should be awakened to a sense of their responsibilities in this respect.

(4) It should be the aim to inspire confidence between parent and child and teacher and child.

Girls, as a rule, are allowed too much freedom in the street.

(5) There should be some supervision of girls to and from—

(i.) Evening Schools.

(ii.) Church.

(iii.) Band of Hope, etc.

(6) Women Inspectors should be appointed for parks and open spaces.

(7) Cases of misconduct should be severely dealt with by the magistrates.

(8) Girls under 16 years of age should be refused admission to picture palaces after 9 p.m., and there should be a censorship of the pictures.

The head mistress, Mrs. Cadley, in answer to questions put to her by various members of the Committee, made the following replies —

She had never in her long experience, both in a poor school and in a better class school, known a girl to go wrong.

Mrs. Cadley thought there was really very little immoral conversation—although in many cases girls appeared to know more of this subject than was good for them.

It might be well to give detailed instruction in certain individual cases. The head mistress could not possibly undertake the responsibility of imparting the individual instruction to that extent, owing to stress of work, although, if it were possible, it might be the best thing. Any such instruction should be confined to the head teacher, except in the case of an experienced assistant teacher. Nature told a girl, whether modest or otherwise, how far to go. She did not think the ordinary girl knew everything; it was the exceptional girl.

A frivolous and fast girl would have to be more carefully dealt with than one who was inclined to take a serious view of the subject, and, therefore, it would be necessary to adapt the teaching to each individual case. It was a subject one could not teach in a class. The children were of various ages, and in various stages of development. This teaching was wise up to a certain point if it was given individually to children from eleven to fourteen, but under that age, it was not at all wise.

It was the witness's opinion that the scripture lesson ought to be used in moral instruction; she used it largely.

Mrs. Cadley very rarely found obscene writing in the offices. Very often she sent down to inspect, and to copy the writing, but did not magnify the incident, simply announcing that she had seen writing of which she was ashamed, and which would bring dishonour

to the school. Sometimes she watched the children's writing in order to trace it. This had a very strong effect on the discipline of the school.

Mrs. Cadley believed very strongly in appealing to the parents when any serious breach of discipline took place, and during the last five years there has been no case of corporal punishment in the whole of the department. This did not mean that she allowed these things to pass, she always dealt with them through the parents, and if the mother did not take the matter up, she approached the father by post. She keeps in touch with a large number of her girls after leaving school.

Any misbehaviour by the girls in the street was reported by the teachers to the parents, and she felt in her own case, that not only in school, but outside, any bad habits were thus effectually stopped.

In conclusion, witness stated that she made a point of never allowing girls to wear rings or jewellery in school, as she considered it was vanity and frivolity which often led girls wrong, and if this love of finery could be stopped in the schools, it would be an incentive to the girls to develop into good and useful women.

Mrs. M. E. LAIRD, *Head Mistress, Girls' Dept., Middle-row, School, (Kensington, N).*

Mrs. M. E. Laird stated that she had attended some lectures on Eugenics by Professor Karl Pearson, and had read much upon the subject and that she thought the subject was quite outside the elementary schools. The girls were too young, even the older girls, and a little sympathetic talk with them individually would better answer the purpose.

She felt that nothing of the kind ought to be included in a syllabus.

As far as she personally was concerned, she got into touch with every girl as she was leaving the school and had a talk with them. She talked to them about the behaviour of a girl, what a girl should be when she went out into the world and of the temptations she would have to meet; she encouraged them to go to the school to see her and one of the mistresses encouraged them to go to her home. All the mistresses kept in touch with the girls as much as it was possible to do, since it was much easier to talk to them when they got to sixteen or eighteen.

She knew the mothers of most of the girls and they often came and asked her to tell the girls certain things. It was quite as necessary to keep girls under good influences after the age of fourteen as well as before. Witness considered the moral tone higher now than it was many years ago and she had worked in poor schools all her life, except for a period of about three years.

She came to London at a terrible time, when Board Schools were first opened. She was of opinion that the poor girl did not want quite so much looking after as the girl a grade or two higher

socially. From personal observation she thought that if there were any girls that needed looking after at the age of fourteen they were the girls with parents who could dress them rather smartly and allowed too much freedom in the evenings. The mothers adopted a wrong attitude, and talked too freely in front of them. The London girl was certainly not ignorant.

She had no hesitation in saying that these things should not be taught in classes ; if she had a girl who attended a class where this instruction was given she would take her away immediately, even if the subject was taught by the head mistress herself.

It was not what a girl said or did in front of her teacher, it was what she did when the teacher was not there. A girl of fourteen should not have this subject introduced to her ; the children should be kept young.

She would not talk about the subject unless special conditions demanded, not even privately, to a girl of thirteen or fourteen ; she would watch very carefully, and if she saw evidence that a girl wanted talking to, she would do so, otherwise she would leave her alone.

Mr. J. W. SAMUEL, B.A., *Head Master of the " Millwall " Central Mixed School (Poplar).*

Mr. Samuel stated that improvement in morals in the schools in which he had worked for a good many years was sufficiently well marked, without any artificial stimulus, such as had been suggested by this subject ; and he was strongly opposed to the teaching of what might be called " physiological eugenics." He would hesitate a very great deal to tell children anything touching the birth of a child. He had been watching in the East End of London for the last five or six years, and did not find it as bad as the advocates of eugenics asserted. He did not know a case sufficiently strong to induce him to take up anything like an advanced view on the matter.

In his mixed school there were more girls than boys. If the elder girls were left under a sensible married woman there could not be anything better. In the case of boys, there were some things which it was dangerous to talk to them about—especially to naturally precocious London boys. If a number of boys were put together it was certain that in some of them the worst features would come out ; although in a great many cases they became quite normal members of society after they had passed through the critical period.

He would not talk too much about these things to boys, and would certainly hesitate to call them by the names adopted by some writers on eugenics, because there was a morbid tendency to lay too much stress on sex relationship in early life.

All these things should be approached from the point of view of personal hygiene, personal cleanliness, or what might be called

personal sanctity of the human body. He thought the result of allowing teachers to give instruction in eugenics would be to run the whole thing to death. If it had to be taught, it should be undertaken by a medical man. If necessary to speak to children on these evils, to do so through the medium of a person eminently well qualified for the purpose was the better plan.

The children had knowledge on the subject from the age of nine or ten, and the girl who had care of her mother from the time she took to her bed very soon learned.

Class teaching on the subject was undesirable.

There should be a healthy tone in the schools regarding sex hygiene. With regard to the girls, there were certain times in a girl's life when one might have a quiet talk with her, but it should be by a qualified person and should be done in an extremely frank manner and tone, but the subject should be discussed individually. He thought that to make of this a class subject was altogether unreasonable, unnecessary, and uncalled for.

He watched his boys very carefully and if he had the slightest suspicion that a boy was doing these things, or that a boy was influencing others in this direction, he would take that boy, or the several boys concerned, and have a talk with them, giving them such information as he considered would set them right. He made it a practice never to address a class on such a matter.

He once had an extremely precocious boy, who he believed was getting questionable books from some private library. He talked to this boy quite plainly about the matter, as plainly as he would talk to any ordinary boy of seventeen or eighteen, and told him exactly for what purpose he was in the world.

He had had, perhaps, half a dozen cases of boys going wrong in the way he had just stated. He questioned these boys as to habits of personal purity—always individually. He took great care that the offices in the school were always clean in the matter of scribbling on the walls, and so on. He visited the offices in his school every day, morning and afternoon. He regarded it as an important part of his duty, and the result was he had not had for some years a case of scribbling in the offices.

He believed that a great deal of this trouble arose from what he might be allowed to call "calfishness." A girl of 13 or 14 was a woman. He thought there was much that was good in the idea of bringing boys and girls together a great deal more. He instanced his experience of the last six years in taking out parties of children, boys and girls, to the country. Since he had been in the "Mill-wall," he had had mixed parties in the dining hall on these trips. He had allowed boys and girls to mix together with perfect freedom, and he considered it was a wise thing to do. He thought that something might be done in that way to accustom a boy to a girl's presence, a girl's influence, and that sort of thing. That would do a great deal more good, he thought, than any number of talks about Eugenics.

Personally, he saw no use in talking about morals, minor or major. He would have a doctor talk to the boys—a woman doctor in the case of girls, and he would have it told them purely from the standpoint of physiology, or pending some other arrangement he would certainly prefer to convey the instruction himself, and not through the medium of a class teacher. That is for boys, of course.

Asked what he would think of a course of lectures given to boys and girls somewhat on the following lines: beginning with plant life; continuing with lower animal life; and concluding with man and woman, witness replied emphatically that, in his opinion, it was not the correct way of dealing with the matter, and that such a method would lead to no good.

He did not think it would be desirable to have a syllabus of the course outlined, but he would like to see one drawn up. He did not know if he had any children in his school who lived in one room with their parents, but he did know that girls who were absent from school owing to domestic reasons very seldom took their mistresses into their confidence.

He doubted if a boy in an elementary school reached that glamour stage which might lead to immorality. It would be different with a boy of 17 or 18.

He might warn boys by giving an account of certain diseases. It would be better to do that than waste the boy's time with accounts of the changes of a caterpillar into a butterfly. He would tell the boy frankly and plainly that here was something which, in nine cases out of ten, would have evil results; he would let the boy know it in its worst form. He thought that in many cases it was simply a matter of curiosity—of simple intellectual curiosity.

The syllabus submitted by a head mistress, as he read it, was a mingling of what was perfectly practical in some ways, and what was altogether transcendental. He would not tell these things to his girls.

Mrs. S. J. BANNISTER, L.L.A., *Principal of Moorfields Training College.*

Mrs. Bannister was of opinion that the foundation of the teaching of Eugenics was the inculcation of cleanly habits, which she felt had not been sufficiently emphasised in the schools. A school should, first of all, be an ideal of cleanliness, and children should be taught the habits of personal cleanliness and respect for the body long before they were taught anything, say, about the structure of the skin.

It should be the first concern of the school to establish habits of personal cleanliness. No verbal instruction in sex hygiene could serve any useful purpose except as subsidiary to this. As to how far teaching on sex questions could be given verbally, there she

felt again that most people seemed to have arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary to give boys and girls some information about their own origin, but in her opinion there was great danger of attaching too much importance to verbal instruction. Another danger was that of laying too great stress on the physical side. Many people who were interested in this question seemed to imagine that they had done the whole thing if they taught children certain physical facts and talked about certain processes in human beings by analogy with the lower animals and the plant world. If we approached the human through the less than human, and forgot that human beings had a moral and a spiritual side, we were in great danger of doing harm.

Collective teaching was likely to destroy the habit of reticence, and the feeling of modesty. Children felt, and quite rightly, that whatever the teacher talked to them about, they could talk to each other about, and we might go from a state of ignorance harmful in one way to a state of knowledge distinctly harmful in another way. The right moment for one child was not the right moment for another, and she would shrink very much from talking to children collectively about sexual matters.

She thought the mother was the right person to impart this information, and she was not sure that we were acting rightly in the matter by assuming that since mothers did not do it, teachers should. She would prefer to educate the mothers. In any case, the teachers should not deal with the matter without the knowledge and consent of the mothers. At the same time, she felt that there were problems of a serious nature, such as these which teachers had to face with children. She herself had endeavoured to bear this in mind in dealing with the students at her college. Before students left the college, she talked with them or got some woman friend to talk to them about malpractices common among quite little children which teachers should know how to detect and how to check. She also talked to them about themselves and their responsibilities as women. This year every student when about to leave was given a copy of "The Power and Responsibility of Womanhood," published by the Eugenics Education Society. She had also had "Teaching Truth," by Dr. Mary Wood Allen, put into the College library. Witness instanced another book, called "Things we must tell our Girls," which dealt with the same questions in a way which she thought suitable for putting before girls. She thought that, although opposed to collective teaching as a general question, two or three private talks might well be arranged for a class composed of girls just about to leave school. She would tell them a good deal of what was contained in the books she had recommended. She would not have a syllabus at all. There was a good deal in the syllabus placed before her on which she would speak to children, but she would not consider it wise or necessary to deal with all that was contained in it.

She would not give these lessons in an ordinary way to children under fourteen in class, but as a little farewell talk to girls about to leave. She would not like to see them in the school syllabus. Girls when they were on the point of leaving school looked to those under whose guidance they had been for some time, for help through the next stage of life, and a little talk, say once or twice before they left, should be useful and helpful to them. She felt strongly that the mere possession of knowledge is no guarantee for right conduct, and she would expect to achieve less by verbal instruction than by attention to children's habits and by having special regard for their environment, endeavouring to secure that this should encourage respect for every part of their bodies. No education of any kind worthy of the name could be given until there had been established habits of personal cleanliness and self-respect.

One had to feel one's way when one talked to the young. What one might feel impelled to say to one set of girls, one would not say to another. She felt it was impossible either to reduce to a syllabus all that might sometimes be said or to say that everybody must deal with it or that everybody must leave it alone.

In her opinion, most girls of anything over twelve knew something of the physical processes of life. It was very difficult to gauge just how much a girl really did know. Many girls who were as a rule quite conscientious and sincere, would not infrequently simulate ignorance, but from the cases she actually came in contact with, she was of opinion that most girls had more knowledge than was commonly supposed. She believed that the number of girls who took the wrong step through ignorance was not great. It was something in the girl's character and not lack of knowledge that was generally responsible.

In the case of overcrowded homes where birth and death and all the events of life happened in the same room, children did undoubtedly get a great deal of knowledge that one felt sorry they should get when so young. She also held the view that boys and girls of the age of anything over twelve, should not be kept constantly in each other's company.

From her training college experience she was able to say that there was, among students, knowledge of sexual questions, and more knowledge of late. She thought the presence of the school doctor had done a great deal, and the talks the children and the teachers had had with the doctor had paved the way for more knowledge. Medical inspection had provided a means of approach to many matters which had received no attention before.

If one could be sure of keeping reverent attitude of mind in the girls, she thought that was the chief thing necessary. Speaking of girls of twenty years of age, who were about to become teachers, she found they were very much concerned with the amount of knowledge possessed by the children with whom they would presently have to deal.

The whole thing was much in the air just at the present. Ten years ago it seemed as if people had not begun to think about these matters at all, but now they seemed to be in the minds of everybody, and it was necessary to consider how to deal with them. She was sure that students in training colleges were very anxious indeed to know how far it was their duty to approach the subject with children. What she talked to them most about so far as the children under their charge were concerned was being able to detect habits of self-abuse which were common among quite little children, both boys and girls—habits which were very largely the outcome of lack of cleanliness. In this way practices began which teachers ought to be able to detect and prevent. She felt, however, that it was not by means of a syllabus that this could be brought about.

She thought that every head mistress in an elementary school would either herself give such instruction in sex hygiene as she thought necessary or would be able to find at least one woman on her staff to whom it could be entrusted, but she would like to leave any person undertaking it as free as possible. She would be distinctly sorry to see a syllabus of any kind introduced whether into a secondary or an elementary school.

She would leave it to teachers to deal with the question or not, as they thought fit. But she would not allow a head mistress to put a syllabus such as that on the table (submitted by a head-mistress) into the hands of a young teacher, and require her to teach from it.

Beyond a most helpful address which the wife of the Bishop of Islington gave last July to students about to leave, there had been nothing in the nature of lectures at her College. The Bishop's wife spoke out of much knowledge gained through work in connexion with Rescue and Preventive Homes, and the students greatly appreciated her address. She brought to her (witness's) notice the books referred to.

Mr. W. A. NICHOLLS, *late Headmaster, Boys' Dept., Ruby-street School (Peckham).*

Mr. W. A. Nicholls, late headmaster of the boys' department of the Ruby-street L.C.C. School (*Peckham*), stated that some teaching in Sex Hygiene should be given in the schools, but not until the boys were thirteen. With regard to the girls, he would express no opinion whatever.

He thought that inasmuch as most boys were absolutely innocent at the age of 13 in regard to these matters, especially those who came from good homes, it would be undesirable to give collective lessons. He thought the teacher should ascertain as far as possible whether definite teaching in this respect was needed. He understood they were suggesting physiological teaching, in which case he thought great care would have to be exercised; but if they were

going to give moral teaching, they might give such teaching collectively.

Two things had to be looked at in giving this instruction to boys. The first was as to whether self-abuse was at all a prevalent evil amongst the class of boys in the ordinary elementary schools in London, and, he was bound to say that so far as his own personal experience went, and he had fortified his opinion by asking other teachers—in Woolwich and Plumstead particularly—he did not find that self-abuse was prevalent among boys under fourteen years of age. Doctors told him they got a good many cases among boys who had left school, and who had become addicted to self-abuse, but so far as he was able to judge, self-abuse was not a growing evil, and it would be almost unwise to deal with it physiologically. He thought that when people began to consider the necessity for conveying warning against self-abuse, it was essential to be very careful to ascertain first that the boys knew what the thing meant, otherwise much harm might be done. The last three years of his life had been spent in an environment altogether different from the previous years, and he had not been able to detect signs of self-abuse, but the doctor who came pointed out boys whom he thought guilty of that evil, and therefore he (Mr. Nicholls) suggested the doctors might, in visiting boys' schools, pay special attention to that matter and inform the teacher. Probably the doctor himself would be the best person to deal with the matter from the purely physiological standpoint, while the teacher should deal with the moral standpoint. In the slum districts it was, in his opinion, not self-abuse but sexual intercourse that was the evil.

He thought that, in regard to the aspect of eugenics covered by what Dr. Saleeby called preparation for paternity, when a boy was on the point of leaving school, just as boys were warned against intemperance, and other evils of that kind, so it might be possible to guard them against the evils of the streets in regard to temptations there. He thought, perhaps, looking back over his own life, that that was a neglected duty.

He would refer in class to the outward forms of the evil, the dangers moral and physical they would encounter in the streets. A boy of 13 would, in many cases, know the facts of life in crowded districts as well as in the country.

He thought that the moral tone, as a whole, was higher, to-day than it was forty years ago. He was an old Sunday School man, and instanced how there had been evils common enough in the Sunday School thirty or forty years ago, but which were entirely absent now. He thought there was undoubtedly a move up.

If they dealt with the evil of self-abuse amongst boys, they must not have class teaching, but he was not certain in his own mind whether they ought not to give to boys the physiological teaching necessary for them to understand how essential it was for them to preserve their own bodies, if only from the selfish point of view.

He was assuming that the boys actually knew the facts of procreation. It was not necessary to teach them that ; it was essential to make them look at it in rather a wiser way.

His objection to saying anything definitely about parenthood to a class of boys would be that really it was not a matter that ought to be in their minds at all at the age of fourteen ; when he said "Preparation for Paternity," he meant the preservation of the purity of their bodies.

Speaking perfectly plainly, he did not think that they ought to tell the boys, or the girls either, in our schools all about the organs of procreation in the human race. He thought a boy ought to know sufficient about his own body to be able to preserve that, but he was not at all convinced that they ought to explain to him the organs of the female sex, and thus go into the whole question of procreation.

He agreed there were subjects taught in the schools such as nature study, where the explanation of the organs of reproduction amongst plants might possibly lead to a detailed explanation of the organs of reproduction in the human body.

Assuming that the boys knew something about the matter, he would give them a plain straight warning against the immorality and the dangers of commerce with girls, not in the ordinary class, but to a special class made up of a few, certainly not more than half a dozen. He did not think it would be necessary to give such warning more than once or twice during school life.

He would not use as the basis for his talks anything like the syllabus before him, and he would be particular as to the assistants to whom he would delegate the duty of speaking to the boys.

Before anything was done the teachers would have to be prepared.

Mrs. E. M. BURGWIN, *Superintendent of Schools for Mentally and Physically Defective.*

Mrs. Burgwin stated that she found it very difficult to discuss this problem of sex-teaching in schools. She found, and this had given her pause to think, that women over forty years of age have been all against it, and women of from twenty to thirty have all been for it. There were three periods of the child's life ; there was the pre-adolescent period, then the child reached puberty, then there came the purely adolescent period—all affording opportunities of speaking to the child. Really, this teaching began from the time the child was born ; the good mother who watched her child would not allow it to touch itself. If the child was brought up in a healthy manner it would meet with none of the difficulties which she candidly confessed she saw in schools to-day.

In the cases of the girls she had met she would never take as a special subject, or as one for class teaching, the question of the sex problem, since she knew that what was food for one child was poison for another. She thought that if this subject were taken as a whole, or as a class subject, good might perhaps be done to a few,

but there was danger of a great deal of harm to the many. She thought the subject should not be approached from the purely medical standpoint, but should be placed upon a higher moral plane. Every girl must protect her own body and live in purity and chastity, otherwise she was going to suffer ; she would tell them how they would suffer. Referring to the condition of some poor homes, she quoted an instance of a child of nine, who had already been present at the birth of one child. What could be taught such a child ? If you taught the young child you terrified it. She objected strongly to this early specialisation. She urged that a beginning should be made with the purity of thought, and that this should be put on the highest moral tone possible, that is, the charge of the body. This should be taught to every boy and every girl, but not collectively in a class.

She considered that we were assuming too much if we thought that in the schools we could do what the father and mother should do. We were making too big a call upon the school. There were failures in many homes because of the want of parental control, and she would urge the duties of the father and mother. Then, she was told that the parents were so grossly ignorant. She would say they could not be as ignorant as they were twenty and thirty years ago. They had had the Education Act since 1870, the parents had gone through our schools, and surely they had a higher intelligence than their mothers and fathers had before them, who had little or no education. She thought, therefore, it was possible to appeal to the parents.

Speaking of a Rescue Home which she knew, she said that there was not one girl there who had fallen into it through hunger or want of any kind. She had investigated and found that no one was hungry, no one was in want of money. No one but knew that this was wrong. She concluded that we have still to impress upon our children, every boy and every girl in the school, that righteousness alone will prevail. It was possible to bring these thoughts of purity into every child's mind. She had never yet found a syllabus that she would like to put into a school, if it was intended to discuss reproduction and parenthood.

She would speak to every girl leaving the school individually and impress on them that it was their duty to allow nobody to touch them indecently, nor permit anybody to kiss them in the streets.

She did not want them to refrain from this thing because it might result in venereal diseases, but because it was unrighteous.

In the case of defective girls, special care was taken in all our schools. They were well guarded, because, sexually, they were much more trouble, at a much earlier age, too. It seemed almost as though the brain being defective the animal passions predominated. They had not the control. They had not the power within them. It might be concluded that, so far as that class of girl was concerned, very considerable care was being taken, and that nothing more could be done by strengthening the control.

Speaking of the question generally, she stated that parents were frequently very lax in their care of the children. They let them out as late as ten and eleven o'clock, and so these sexual ideas were developing before the period of puberty.

She concluded by saying that the condition of our parks and open spaces was a matter for grave concern, and she emphasised the necessity for securing fuller supervision.

Mr. R. B. HENDERSON, M.A., *Head Master of Strand School (Norwood)*.

Mr. Henderson stated that, prior to his school being taken over by the Council, he had contemplated teaching the subject, and the school doctor had, indeed, to a certain point, given instruction in it, but, since the school came under the Council at the beginning of the present term (September, 1913), he had found that all his arrangements had to be abandoned owing to lack of time allowed to the doctor. He had intended getting him to do it as part of the ordinary training in physical culture.

By "physical culture" he did not mean exercises. He meant the general management of one's body. To begin with, he supposed only about one boy in five had a cold bath in the morning. It was a new idea to most of them, and that was one of the things which the doctor could explain to them, but, since they had become a maintained instead of an aided school, the time at his disposal had been considerably cut down. Formerly the school medical officer used to visit the school one morning per week, but now he could only do so five mornings in a term.

He thought that the syllabus shown to him (submitted by a head mistress) was rather full for a boy of fourteen. It might be necessary and desirable to teach some of it, but there was a good deal in it that might be postponed for a later stage without doing any harm. On the other hand, there was, of course, the difficulty that, if the boys were sent out without that knowledge, they would certainly get it in a much worse way, probably by the age of sixteen; in many cases it would be even earlier, but the average would be about sixteen.

The evils into which boys were led were common in schools; judging from his necessarily limited experience he would be inclined to say that there were very few schools in which they were not prevalent, but it was of course difficult to make a statement unless one had personal knowledge, and schools varied greatly from time to time.

In lecturing to the boys on the subject he would not take the whole physiology of sex till a later age. It would be well not to make sex matters too prominent, and at the same time to set them rather higher than the merely physical point of view by pointing out that the body might be regarded as something very beautiful—rather the Greek idea. He had been prepared to teach some of them that ideal.

He would not lay stress upon the moral side because, for one thing, the boys were inclined to get an exaggerated idea of it, and secondly, most of them would despise the teaching if it were put on that basis. There was another danger: the boys got to think it more important than it actually was—it came to take a morbid place in their imaginations. He would have the subject set out under three heads, of which the physical would rather predominate. Then there would be the æsthetic, and, lastly, there would be the moral, which would have to be kept somewhat in the background.

He would prefer the instruction to be given by the medical man, since it came more naturally from him, and because it was not wise to make it appear too important. He thought it better to get the idea into the heads of the boys in some ordinary way.

The level of age in the boys at his school was high so that it might be inferred that he really took them at what was perhaps the most dangerous period of their lives.

He had only once had to talk plainly to a boy, and then, so far as he was able to discover, the result was satisfactory, but how far, he would not like to say. It was so difficult to get any accurate information.

He had had experience of residential schools, but there was really little difference between them and day schools. It was not easier for the authorities to deal with the evils in a residential than in a day school.

The whole object was to bring this instruction in quite naturally. It was necessary also to keep an ideal before the boy, the ideal of improving his body, to regard it as an instrument placed in his keeping, which it was his duty to keep in good order: he thought there was great danger of making too great a moral point of it. He did not want it to be understood that he would keep the sense of duty entirely out. Far from that, but he did think that that could be exaggerated.

It might be possible to arrange to have it taught as an ordinary subject by every assistant. It would be a very interesting experiment. When it was taken with all the other subjects it might come in quite naturally and properly, but it seemed to him that the average schoolmaster would find it rather beyond his powers to deal with it in this way.

According to his experience, the subject might be taken up at 13 or 14, but some boys at 10 knew a great deal more than others of 15. That difficulty would always be met with in any form of class teaching. He thought it was the duty of parents of abnormally developed children to observe their boys, but he did not think these cases were very common.

He thought that the interest became developed between ten and fourteen. He would not, of course, tell the boys very much about the subject to begin with, he would begin with the less controversial subjects, which would naturally develop into the other.

To a certain extent, the doctor ought from time to time to

encourage the boys to go to him privately if they wished to do so : thus it would be possible to get hold of the abnormally developed boy. It was very easy for doctors to determine the stage of development. There were of course boys who always wanted to go to the doctor, but a sensible doctor soon discovered and discouraged that.

Mrs. E. McMILLAN, *Head Mistress, Girls' Dept., " Moberly " School (Paddington, S.).*

Mrs. McMillan stated that she was not in favour of class teaching of the subject : where she noticed anything unusual she invariably met the case by private individual talks, but the necessity arose very seldom. The difficulty existed in a very slight degree in her department. The children came from well ordered homes, and it was only very occasionally that she found a girl who would be better for a little plain speaking. When she had occasion to speak to such a girl, it was not as a school-mistress that she approached the question, but rather from the point of view of the girl's friend.

She had arrived at the conclusion that no good would be done by actual teaching : such teaching would possibly defeat its own ends in that it might have a coarsening effect on the girls. It would have to be done in so very careful a manner and by such special treatment that she doubted whether the ordinary teacher could approach it advantageously.

She thought it was perfectly true that London school children knew a very great deal at a very early age, but she also thought that until a girl was approaching womanhood, sexual knowledge did not appeal to her, and that she did not consider it personally, unless it happened to be brought before her very early : thirteen or fourteen years of age was too early for such knowledge to be given to girls. It was impossible to lay down a hard and fast line as some girls developed much earlier than others, and the correct age at which to begin such instruction could only be gauged and determined by one who was watching the individual girls with sympathy and understanding.

The temperament of different girls varied very much ; they were to be divided into types, and one who had the care of girls could, after a time, easily place them in the various classes.

Firstly, there was the extremely self-conscious girl who was possibly intelligent, and who would be better for a little plain speaking in order to make her understand the relative position of such matters in her knowledge. Then there was the bold and flighty girl who had a tendency to sexualism and required restraint, and in whose case it was doubtful whether plain speaking would be advantageous. A girl of that kind was strong-willed and would follow her own bent. It was doubtful what good effect conversation would have in such a case, unless by a person who had some

great influence upon her. Lastly there was the type of child who thought very little about such matters, and who could safely be left. A large proportion of children came under this last heading.

The action to be taken would differ with the environment of the girls. Girls in poorer neighbourhoods, going into factory life, possessed fuller knowledge, and they would not be much influenced by further teaching: they would regard it as somebody else's point of view; under no circumstances would she give class teaching, but class teaching, given as an incidental part of some other subject, might be a very small matter.

To speak to the girls at her own school would be to put ideas into their minds which just now were not there. She thought they understood the physical details, but that these did not appeal to them, and from what she had heard they obtained this knowledge from conversation at home, and, in addition, from the instinctive curiosity of a girl, she had not found conversations going on amongst them.

The witness thought that the girls had knowledge by the time they reached thirteen or fourteen, but not sooner—except in some few special cases.

She did not think that teaching would actually add to their knowledge. They would have a general idea, but would not apply it to themselves.

With regard to girls of the bold type she did not think it likely that they would improve if these matters were discussed with them. It would not do to discuss such matters with these girls openly. More might be done by private and individual talk, but it required the most careful handling. It was necessary to be as matter-of-fact as possible, and to carefully guard against emotion. She suggested the private talk because one wanted to encourage reticence in such matters: if it was to be openly discussed she thought the child would naturally imbibe an opinion that it really did not matter, while she thought that making it a private and individual talk would encourage them in reticence, and not spoil any feelings of modesty, which certainly did exist in all girls, even in those whom she had described as bold. She was of the opinion that class teaching would tend to encourage common talk among the girls.

Miss JOSEPHINE L. D. FAIRFIELD, M.D., Ch.B., *one of the Council's Medical Assistants.*

Dr. Fairfield stated that she was unable to say, so far as elementary schools were concerned, that the subject ought to have any place at all in class teaching, except in so far as the head mistress may choose to speak to elder girls before leaving school. Head mistresses should have the power to deal with difficult moral cases as they arise, but, so far as class teaching was concerned, she (the witness) would oppose it very strongly indeed.

She had seen a good deal of the teaching of such things in various schools, but, from the point of view of the children, she considered

it as extremely unsatisfactory. She could not understand exactly what was being aimed at, but the results were emphatically such as it was not desirable to see in the elementary schools. She was opposed to class teaching of any kind, under any heading.

In so far as the suggestion was to approve of the teaching of the general rules of reproduction with regard to biology and botany, that might be taken for granted. But any application to human individuals could not be taken up in class.

She gave an instance where the instruction had been partly along ethical and partly religious lines to children of ten to eleven. The result was exceedingly gratifying to the head teachers. For her part, she could only say that the subsequent conversation of the children, which had been overheard, on sex matters was more indecent than anything she had ever heard. What was far worse, whatever the teacher might like to say, the children looked upon the whole thing as altogether individual and personal. The case quoted was in a mixed (girls and boys) class, and the children took far more interest in the subject than was desirable; their curiosity seemed to be stimulated rather than appeased.

She could not see how a teacher could deal with the subject at all as a separate subject. She thought that the general laws of reproduction could be taught in biology; other questions should be dealt with by parents, for the reason that different children vary enormously in their rate of development in regard to such matters. A good deal of harm would result from giving children information they were not prepared to receive. The latest developments in the psychology of the child show how very different the child's point of view was in such matters, and also showed the very great danger which ensued from giving the children premature shocks in such matters.

The teacher was probably capable of giving such instruction to her own children, but not necessarily to other people's children. However unsatisfactory parents might be as teachers of this subject, she could not agree that they might be replaced by the school teacher. It would be much better first to instruct teachers and parents themselves. A great many girls leaving training colleges do so in a deplorable state of ignorance—there were gaps in their information which made them very unreliable guides. Furthermore, a great deal might be done by having talks with the mothers, both in the secondary schools and in elementary schools. It would be a slower way, but she thought it would be the best in the long run. She found extraordinary ignorance of the simplest sex hygiene even among educated women. She had heard mothers say that it was wicked to explain these things to their daughters; clearly they must first be taught themselves.

It was with the younger children under thirteen that she had raised objections with regard to class teaching. It was hard for adults to realise how utterly incapable young children were of understanding the wider aspects of the sex question. She thought

children were interested in the subject in very much the same manner as they are interested in the working of a steam engine—in an altogether mechanical fashion. The social and ethical aspects of sex they were incapable of comprehending and had no interest in whatever.

While she agreed that many parents were unsuitable to impart instruction of this kind to their children, it was no argument for class teaching. For one thing, many children are extremely modest and reticent on the subject, and it was not right to break down this modesty, although it was difficult to distinguish between false and genuine modesty. Also the teacher would be confronted by a mass of children, at totally different stages of sexual development. It would be a really excellent plan to give instruction in the evening institutes. In the higher classes of the secondary schools, hygiene and physiology classes were now being conducted. She thought they might very well have a concluding lesson for the elder girls—not so much a formal lecture as a talk—on the subject, applying it to human physiology; it would be very helpful to the girls' health—healthful to their understanding. The subject would not then come as a shock. The girls would have learnt to regard the bodily functions with reverence. As for the wider aspects—the social and ethical aspects—she thought that adolescent girls would derive more valuable information from reading good fiction and literature, than from studying special books or attending special lectures on the subject.

Girls of seven and eight frequently obtained sex knowledge, but she could not see what it was possible to do, other than to attempt to improve their moral tone along general lines. She regarded such precocious knowledge as a very unfortunate incident for which we were not responsible, and which could not be corrected by any means at our disposal; but that talks might be arranged with each girl when at fourteen she was about to leave school, and this instruction should be given individually, in order to take note of the special facts in connection with each individual. That was all that could be done, so far as the elementary school was concerned.

She wished especially to emphasise the desirability of providing every student in the training college with a sound knowledge of the elements of the laws of reproduction and sex hygiene. This was necessary for their own welfare and also that the information they gave to young people in their charge might have a real scientific basis. This seemed to her the first and most necessary step in the direction of sex education.

Mr. C. J. THOMAS, *M.B., B.Sc., D.P.H., Assistant Medical Officer, London County Council.*

Dr. Thomas was of opinion that it was not possible to convey direct information of this kind, which would be of any value, in class to elementary school children.

The children were on different levels in regard to this question;

some were not interested in the topic at all, some were quite innocent, some already knew much, and some are more lewd in their knowledge than others. Great risk was being incurred in setting free the bounds of reticence and modesty. Children will talk among themselves about matters conveyed to them in class, and whatever the teacher might say, however the teacher's remarks might be framed, they would add their own views on the matter amongst themselves. They would go home and tell their parents, and confuse what they had been told in school with what they had heard from other children who might possibly be evil-minded. Modesty and reticence were great safeguards with nice-minded children, and class teaching directly dealing with these matters would from this point of view be an evil, inasmuch as it would tend to break down these natural barriers which, in his opinion, comprised the chief safeguard we possessed in these matters.

It would be a very useful thing, given the right type of head master, to speak privately and separately to boys of about twelve to fourteen. Such a master might find out, by careful questioning, how much the boys knew, and might give very useful advice suitable to each individual case. There were boys who were prone to bad habits, and a head master who was very careful might do a great deal of good by speaking to such boys.

Knowledge itself had very little effect. He thought that every boy indulging in vicious habits did so with a sense of wrong-doing; and if it was sought to cure the trouble, it was necessary to improve his moral outlook generally. Improvement would come only through general strengthening of character by moral influences and not by specific information with regard to special facts. That the sense of wrong-doing was present was shown by the fact that the boy was secretive about his habits; he hid his sin and denied it when challenged.

He had had to deal with a great many boys who had been affected by this habit, and whilst he agreed that the habit may have arisen in the beginning out of curiosity, he maintained that in every case he knew of, a boy of twelve years knew he was doing wrong, and doing a thing he ought to stop. In most cases there had been an attempt on the boy's part to stop it.

These boys, however, did not see the seriousness of it, they did not see the gravity of it. They required the momentum brought to bear upon them of a strong moral influence.

He agreed it might be a very useful thing for the head master to speak to the boys individually.

The doctor too might be very useful. He did not know that the doctor was a better person to convey such instruction than the teacher. If the teacher thinks that the assistance of the doctor would be useful, he did not see why the doctor should not speak to the children individually, but never collectively.

The chief reason against speaking collectively to the children was the existence of the natural feeling of reticence and modesty

that all decent people have, which collective treatment of the question tended to break down. It was impossible to get to grips with the subject if treated as a class subject, because no one in his senses proposed to deal in class with the ultimate facts, about which, once curiosity was aroused, the child desired enlightenment. Children would no sooner reach the playground than they would begin to talk about it, and since a subject treated openly in class would clearly be one upon which conversation in the playground could not be deprecated, very undesirable knowledge would be imparted to the more innocent by the more lewd.

Dr. Thomas reiterated, in reply to a question, that he was perfectly sure that, although possibly innocently acquired in the first instance, later, say at twelve, every boy knows that indulging in vicious practices is a wrong thing to do. When done innocently it is done openly. The moment they wish to hide it, and the moment they begin to deny it, there must be a feeling of wrongdoing. It was a very difficult thing to tackle, and was generally tackled by giving the children erroneous ideas about the seriousness of the results, and the boy who was the victim of the habit very soon became melancholy and sometimes it led to terrible results mentally. The results, physically, were not very serious, but the mental result was exceedingly grave in those cases in which considerable exaggeration in respect of the physical effects had been used in imparting information to boys already in the grip of the habit and who, while honestly desiring to become free, found difficulty in conquering it.

While deprecating any attempt at class teaching on sexual subjects in elementary schools he was of opinion that organised effort should be made to ensure knowledge being imparted to young men and women at a later age, inasmuch as many young men—and women—were launched into the world to fend for themselves without a knowledge of dangers and diseases which existed. These things could not be taught in elementary schools.

(It was remarked by Canon Swallow that, whilst he was not a member of the Section, he wished to identify himself with everything Dr. Thomas had said. He himself had been dealing with this sort of thing for forty years, and he would not wish to alter a word that had been said by the witness.)

MAJOR ERNEST GRAY, L.C.C.

Major Ernest Gray asked permission to submit his views :—

He said he had been the head master of an elementary school. He was an elementary school boy, had taken a certificate in animal physiology at the age of sixteen—he was attending an elementary school at the time—and a teaching certificate at the age of seventeen. He believed that certificate gave him the right to teach physiology, including the reproduction of species, at that early age. As a teacher, he knew something of the effect of bringing in a stranger

to give lectures on a particular subject. He could not imagine any proposal more calculated to arouse all sorts of questions in the minds of children as to why the doctor was doing this, and not the head teacher. He had usually found that the doctor who had had no training as a teacher could not get down to the level of the child's mind—it was difficult for the doctor to descend to the level of the ordinary artisan's mind. He was quite certain that if anybody was to do this, it was the head teacher. He was perfectly certain it ought not to be taken as a separate and special study. It should be a study arising out of nature study and should result as the natural development of the child's studies. He could recall to this day the lectures he had heard when he was quite a lad at St. Thomas', Charterhouse. He went there for science lectures. There he studied biology. It all came simply as a stage in one's development—in the ordinary course of the development of school work. He could not see the point in suggesting talks by the head master to the boy about to leave. It was all very well if the system of education here was similar to that in other parts of the world, but usually one found that a lad had left by means of a note sent from his mother. Probably by the time the note came to hand the boy had actually obtained a job. There was then no more chance of a talk with him.

The opportunities of having a talk with the boy who knows he is about to leave are very few—very seldom indeed. They might take the elder lads and those the head master imagined might be leaving at an early date, and talk to them if he chose, but here again he did not think it ought to come as a separate subject. He himself learned a good deal in the natural development of scientific studies. He had taught physiology in a London school for several years and had never shirked the question of reproduction. It was possible in this manner to teach the subject to children of leaving age—no father or mother raised the least protest against the lessons—they were all carefully planned out.

When lads understand the structure and functions of flowers, and had been working for a time through physiological studies dealing with animals, and particularly with the human being, they acquire certain scientific terms and descriptions that could be applied without using the language of the street. In the flower, for instance, there was the ovary and the pistil, and one talked of the pollen and stamens, and so forth, and of how the seed was formed, and its development, and so on until the young plant comes forth, and when it comes to dealing with animal physiology the child has been carried through a large portion of the structure of the plant and the teacher would go on to explain the structure and method of development with the human being—the ordinary bisexual flower is very similar—and in this respect he never had the least difficulty.

It was not wise to take it as a separate subject, but rather to take it as part of Nature Study.

Upon examining the last page of the syllabus submitted by a head mistress Major Gray stated that it was altogether beyond his conception of the manner in which the subject could be taught. He disagreed with it entirely ; he thought that it entered into questions much too complex for children. There was too much talk about silkworms, frogs, and all that sort of thing. It had been spread out too much. The ordinary child would become perplexed.

III.

MEMORANDA TO BE DISTRIBUTED AMONG TEACHERS AND SCHOLARS.

MEMORANDA.

(i.) *Information for the use of Girls on leaving school.*

In view of the dangers to girls seeking employment on leaving school, the following information is issued by the London County Council. Teachers will be able to give their pupils further particulars on the subject, but the societies mentioned below can be applied to personally or by letter by girls wanting advice and help, and the addresses of the societies should be kept for reference purposes.

Girls can be met at any railway station or seaport in the United Kingdom at any hour of the day or night, by a member of the Travellers' Aid Society, and escorted to their destination, *if they write three clear days beforehand* to the Secretary of the Travellers' Aid Society, 3 Baker-street, London, W., giving all particulars of the day and hour and station or seaport at which they wish to be met.

Also, if any girl arrives in London without knowing where to go, or misses her train to go on, she can call at the Travellers' Aid Society, and will be helped on her way, or advised what to do, or put up for the night.

Girls wishing to emigrate, or to go to the Colonies, should write for information to whatever Society they belong or else to the Secretary of the British Women's Emigration Association, Imperial Institute, South Kensington, London, who can give all information and assistance as to the best way to get to the Colonies and can also give girls introductions to people there who will be helpful to them.

Very important.

Before accepting any employment in any place out of England girls are strongly recommended to write for information to the Secretary of the Travellers' Aid Society, 3, Baker-street, London, W.; or to the Girls' Friendly Society, Continental Registry and Enquiry Office, 14, Holbein-place, Sloane-square, London, S.W., enclosing a copy of the advertisement and the *name* and *date* of the newspapers in which the advertisement appeared, or the *name and full address* of the *Registry Office* or of the *person* from whom she heard of the employment. If any girl wishes to be met at any railway station or seaport *abroad*, she should give as long a notice as is possible to the Society to which she writes, asking to be met, as the greater distance requires longer time to get replies.

Besides those already mentioned, any of the following addresses are safe ones to go to for information and advice. All have representatives on the Committee of the Travellers' Aid Society, with the exception of the National Children's Home and Orphanage:—

British Women's Emigration Association, Imperial Institute, South Kensington, London, S.W.

Church Emigration Society, Church House, Westminster, London, S.W.

Church of England Women's Help Society, Church House, Westminster, London, S.W.

Girls' Friendly Society, Head Office (for G.F.S. Girls), 39, Victoria-street, Westminster, London, S.W.

Girls' Friendly Society, Continental Registry and Enquiry Office (to which any girls can apply regarding posts abroad), 14, Holbein-place, Sloane-square, London, S.W.

International Catholic Association for Befriending Girls, 265, Vauxhall-bridge-road, London, S.W.

Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, 59, Mansell-street, Aldgate, London, E.

Metropolitan Association for Protecting Young Servants, 296, Vauxhall-bridge-road, London, S.W.

Mothers' Union, Church House, Westminster, London, S.W.

National Children's Home and Orphanage (Girls' Aid Dept.), Head Office, 104-122, City-road, London, E.C. (regarding posts out of Great Britain this Society only makes enquiries for applicants for Canada).

National Vigilance Association, 2, Grosvenor-mansions, 76, Victoria-street, Westminster, London, S.W.

South African Colonisation Society, 23, Army and Navy Mansions, 115, Victoria Street, London, S.W.

Travellers' Aid Society, 3, Baker Street, London, W.

Union Internationale des Amies de la Jeune Fille. London Office, 26, George-street, Hanover-square, London, S.W.

Young Women's Christian Association, 26, George-street, Hanover-square, London, S.W.

Girls are advised never to take a situation even in the United Kingdom without first making enquiries from some such reliable sources as the above, and when going to a strange locality (even for one night), they should make arrangements beforehand for some safe lodging or to be met by a friend. Girls should always endeavour to enquire the way of officials on duty—policemen, postmen, railway porters, or women in charge of railway station waiting rooms, and they should exercise great discretion when spoken to by strangers on any pretence whatever.

(ii.) *Information for Parents, Teachers and Ministers of Religion for the purpose of safeguarding girls seeking employment.*

It has been brought very strongly to public notice of late that many girls who have to earn their own livelihood (in factories, domestic service, theatres, houses of business, offices or professional employment, or as teachers and governesses) leave school quite ignorant of the danger they run in accepting employment through registries and advertisements in newspapers, *without first making careful enquiry* both as to the work offered, the place of destination and the employer.

On the subject of safeguarding girls of every class when obtaining work, or in travelling from place to place, parents and teachers can obtain the fullest reliable information and particulars by writing to *The Travellers' Aid Society, 3, Baker-street, London, W., or the National Vigilance Association, 2, Grosvenor-mansions, 76, Victoria-street, Westminster, London, S.W.*

The reports of both these societies show that many girls every year get quite unnecessarily into very serious anxiety and trouble, monetary loss and even personal danger, *because they and their friends omit to make sufficient enquiry beforehand* regarding work offered them by registries or through advertisements in newspapers or in other ways.

In London all employment registries are now obliged to be *licensed*, and are, therefore, more reliable; but this applies only to the radius over which the London County Council has authority; while everywhere else throughout the United Kingdom anyone may open a registry office for employment without giving the guarantee as to their character, or their object in opening it, which a license would require.* This constitutes a very grave danger to those seeking situations or work of any kind.

Teachers, parents, guardians and clergy are urged to do their utmost at school and at home to make enquiries from some reliable source *before* girls in whom they are interested undertake any post or work; and to satisfy themselves as to the advisability of taking any post offered, and as to what is known about those offering it,

* The only exception is as regards Agencies for theatrical employment, respecting which the Home Office passed byelaws which apply all over England.

however attractive and well paid the work may appear to be. Anyone writing to the societies named below can get the information required in as short a time as post will allow.

For situations abroad or on the Continent it is most important to make enquiries.

Useful information and advice can be obtained from the Secretary of any of the following societies. (All have representatives on the Committee of the Travellers' Aid Society, with the exception of the National Children's Home and Orphanage) :—

British Women's Emigration Association, Imperial Institute, South Kensington, London, S.W.

Church Emigration Society, Church House, Westminster, London, S.W.

Church of England Women's Help Society, Church House, Westminster, London, S.W.

Girls Friendly Society, Head Office, (for G.F.S. girls), 39, Victoria-street, Westminster, London, S.W.

Girls' Friendly Society, Continental Registry and Enquiry Office (to which any girls can apply regarding posts abroad), 14, Holbein-place, Sloane-square, London, S.W.

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